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Subject: The Training of Children.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

“And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”—EPH. VI., 4.

The Sunday for the baptism of children is a fit occasion for the instruction of parents who are bringing up children. It is true that no one can give such directions as shall insure success in the rearing of our children, or in relieving the parent from finding out his own way. When the most has been said, and the best modes have been given, each parent must, after all, make his own experience. There is much that must be left to discretion; much that will scarcely be the same to any two; but some general considerations may greatly help and comfort parents in their work. Some principles may be laid down which, being observed, will help, not only in the government of children, but in governing ourselves, and in governing, or rather, in *managing*, as the phrase is, those with whom we are obliged to transact the affairs of life.

That is a joyful hour in a household when a child is born to the young parents. They must be very worldly, and devoid of sensibility, who do not feel some awe over the new cradle. The mystery of human life comes very near, and never seems more wonderful than at the beginning of life. Perhaps not the little coffin itself is more affecting to one of deep and inward thought than is the cradle. While the child is yet a babe, the parents may have more care, but not so much anxiety, as when it is growing up, and begins to need training. At that time not a few, conscientious and earnest, feel themselves utterly helpless. And if they be cast far away from their parents, as often in this changing land they are, they reach out feeble hands of imploration, and long for some one to give them the clue, or lay down for them some principle, which embracing, they may apply from time to time in the rearing of their households.

I leave to physicians the questions of physical culture; not because they are unimportant in a moral point of view, but because only a section of this great subject can be discussed in any one discourse.

1. It is the more needful to give instruction, because the theory and the practice of family government have very much changed within a generation. The old English rigor of parental authority—that almost despotic government which parents still exercise in Germany—has not been known among us, even from an early day. I think the family opened toward liberty more in America than in the old land, where the Roman spirit and tradition prevailed. But even the strictness of New England has been greatly relaxed—and I think not to the damage of the household. It may be that the government which prevails in one period of time has such relations to public sentiment, and to manners and to customs, that it is better for that period than any later government would be; but I think that the milder type of family government which is prevailing now is certainly better for us than that more rigorous type which prevailed in New England. The prevalent sense of personal liberty, which has increased in the community at large, has penetrated the family and ameliorated its government. Children are freer. They earlier assume their own rights. They are not less loving, but they are certainly less reverential. Reverence, I may remark, has found a very poor soil and climate in America. It grows most scrubby. Children are, I think, taking the whole community together, better reared than they used to be. It will not do to select single instances in making a judgment of what is wisest and best. We must average the community. And if you take high and low, I think there is a greater number of families advanced higher in the care and development and training of their children, than at any former period, although the methods are very different. The schools, the social customs, the political ideas, the public sentiment at large, above all, the religious temper and genius of any age, will largely influence the family life. But the whole routine being broken up, many are perplexed as to what is the wisest course to take. There is so much written, there are so many new-fangled social theories, that a good many persons are sorely disturbed. And I hope to help such.

2. The question is, To whom do the children belong, that come into our households? In ancient days there would have been no hesitation on this point. They belonged to the parents. This was the case in the early periods of the Hebrew history. Nowhere, however, was it the case so emphatically, and in such a heathenish form, as in Rome, where the father owned, not simply his wife, but his children, in precisely the same sense that merchandise is owned; where he had not only the power of absolute government, but the power of life and death—limited, to be sure, in later days, in the Roman economy, but lying at the root of it nevertheless. And in Rome, the *patria potestas*, as it was called technically—the father's authority—did not termi-

nate, as with us, at the age of twenty-one. It remained as long as he lived, and no son could be set free from the absolute authority of the father, who owned him and his—all that was his—his wife, his children, and his property. No child was owned by himself. He was owned by his father, as the father was owned by the grandfather—if he still lived. And there was no way for a young man to get rid of the *patria potestas*, except by a legal enactment—for a law was finally enacted that while a father might sell his son, he could never sell him more than three times; or that if he did, the son should go free. And so, when the son came to be of age, the form of sale was gone through with three times by agreement between the father and the son; and after that the son owned himself. But without that transaction, the father owned the son. And I think that if this old Roman notion of ownership in man were traced out through the church, and the civil government, and through our ethical ideas, it would be found to be at the root of much of the reasoning in theology, and much of the reasoning also in civil economies. It was arbitrary and barbarous, first, middle, and last.

The traces of it are found, also, though in a milder form than among the Hebrews, in the writings of the New Testament—not in approbation, but simply as a testimony of fact; where, for instance, in the fourth chapter of Galatians, the Apostle Paul says:

“Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a slave, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.”

Servant is the translation here. This never could be said in our day. We have to modify it, to make it seem true to us. It was true to ancient custom. Absolute ownership was the old notion; and it is not rubbed out yet. For you will find the mediæval spirit in Europe to this day. And although there is not yet such a property sense of ownership as there once was, the right of the father to his children is almost as rigorous in many parts of Continental Europe and in many parts of England, and in some families in America, as if they were absolutely their slaves.

The great contrast began to appear in the Apostle's writings; and you find traces of it in the context of the passage which I have selected. I will read a verse or two of the sixth of the Ephesians:

“Children, obey your parents.”

Is that it? No! no!

“Children obey your parents *in the Lord*.”

There is a greater ownership than that of your parents. Within that divine circle obey them; but there is limitation. There is the death-blow to the old Roman *patria potestas*.

“Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with

promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the earth. And ye fathers [here comes in the right of the children] provoke not your children to wrath."

You do not own them. You have no right to do just what you please with them. You are not to goad and irritate them. Your government over them is not arbitrary; and you have no right to assume absolute authority over them.

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

In the next two verses Christ's name is interposed in the relation of master and servant.

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh,"

—not according to the eternal principles of rectitude, but, as it were, by an accident of the flesh.

"Be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ."

Why, what an amazing implication this is! If you can not find a motive in your relation to a man who says he owns you, from which to obey him, then understand that you are obeying Christ Jesus, who stands behind him. Do it for Christ's sake if you can not find any reason to do it for the man's sake.

"Not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart."

Thus be obedient to them. Here is clearly discerned the greater ownership, leaving us only, as it were, borrowers of rights. Our children are ours on loan, so to speak. They are lent to us, and are to be returned better than when we took them. We do not own them.

It comes then to this—that our children are God's. We are not sovereigns. Our will is not superior. They belong to One that is higher. And if you doubt that this is the spirit of the new dispensation, and pre-eminently of Christ, listen to that passage which I read in your hearing this morning, from the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, where Christ says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Much difference of notion has obtained among commentators as to the meaning of this; and in some respects it is difficult. But one thing is certain, Jesus did teach that children had rights in heaven; that God did not think of parents alone; that not men with scepters in their hands, and crowns on their heads, not men of power alone, but children, were known in heaven, and were recognized there before God; and that it was a perilous thing for a man to harm them. Was there ever a greater denunciation of woe than this?

"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanging about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

We have heard a great deal said, from time to time, about how Christianity has elevated and refined the condition of woman—and too much can not be said on that subject; but not enough had been said to show what the effect of Christianity has been in ameliorating the condition and exalting the relations of children to their parents.

We *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, then, not for our own pride and profit, not even for the child's own good simply, but for its citizenship in the coming world. And this is to be kept before us as the great end which we are never to lose sight of. That gained, and a man's child may miss everything else, and he has been well brought up; that missed, and if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, he has been wickedly, fatally reared. Our children are God's. Ours are they, only for a specific purpose, which is that we are to nurture them, and educate them, in the fear of the Lord, with reference to their eternal happiness in the heavenly state. How it exalts the miserable vanity which sometimes seems to be the strongest feeling that parents have, how it lifts up ambition, how it intensifies the motives for fidelity and self-sacrifice in us toward our children, that we are working in them for the eternal life, and that every child whom we are tending, or correcting, or nurturing, has an angel, or what is equivalent to that, watching over it! There is an eye and a heart in heaven that is looking after every immortal child on earth. There is not a neglected brat in all the purlieus of vice; there is not an uncombed, unwashed, untaught child that has not some angel heart that is pitying it in the heaven above. Parents may be unfaithful, and neighbors cold and neglectful, but God does not forget the little children that are on earth.

3.—What, under the Christian system of educating children, is the relation of family government? What does the family government seek for each child? Well, the end sought is not to govern it. Government is a means to another end, and not anything that is good in itself. To be sure, we govern our children for the sake of the other children; for the sake of our own peace; for the sake of the comfort and joy of the whole household; but these are incidental things. All family government, in the first instance, is for each child's individual good. We govern that we may teach the child to govern itself at the earliest possible period.

When flowers are blossoming, it is not on account of beauty that they put forth their petals; it is not on account of fragrance; it is not that they may be looked at and rejoiced in. Underneath every blossom is either the germ of the fruit, or else the core with the seed; and the whole strife of the plant is, at the earliest possible period, to push for-

ward that seed, so that it shall be prepared to drop, or begin another life of its own,

And in family government, we govern that we may be done governing just as soon as we possibly can. Our object in governing is to teach our children to govern themselves, and, therefore, not to need our government. We are to develop, as soon as it is proper, a free moral agent, competent to think for itself, to choose wisely for itself, and to act independently for itself. The child, therefore, must be treated as an apprentice of human life. He has come into our family as an apprentice into a shop. He has come there to learn how to live. We are master-workmen, and we are to teach him what we know in order that he may learn how to carry on the business of living in this life according to all the conditions which obtain around about him. He knows nothing. He has everything to learn. His mistakes of passion are not therefore depravity. Although when an adult, a man may be depraved, the mere fact that a child goes wrong, feels wrong, does wrong, is not to be set down so much to depravity as to ignorance of how to do anything else. We are not born with the trade of conduct learned. We are born with a mind full of tools, but with the hand not yet trained to use one of them.

We ought not to count the mistakes of the child in early life, then, to be punishable, any more than the mistakes of the hand in learning a trade. There will be sinfulness enough without it; but mere ignorance of self-government is not to be set down as a sin. It is simply an irregularity to be corrected with the tenderest patience. The child does not know how to do better—why should it?

A great many persons shudder when they see passions—various developments of wild nature—in their children. I do not know why one should shudder at it. The more there is of it, the more strength they have. For power comes with the basilar faculties. And a parent is to take heed of these things, and educe these qualities, training the child in them. Then they will not be dangerous.

A child must have time to learn and time to practice. It is impossible for one to learn the complex problem of life under the very best teachers so as to practice aright right along from childhood in the cradle. We must wait for our children a great while before they will know how to do the best things in the best way.

Parents oftentimes are greatly alarmed, and almost cruel, in pursuing the selfishness of the child. But selfishness is natural to the child. The child is by instinct selfish. The lower life of every child is selfishness. And selfishness is to be taught benevolence. But you cannot teach it in a day. Would you be discouraged because your child did not learn to write in an hour? Would you be discouraged

because your child did not learn how to write a flowing and comely hand in months? You wait patiently for the body to learn anything: Why do you not do the same thing when it is the mind? The child does not know any better than to be selfish, because in the order of development the animal nature comes first, and the higher nature afterwards, as I shall show. The child manifests cruelty. It is not because he is necessarily a cruel being. He does not know how to do any better. He has not been taught. The child does not observe truth. Why should he? Everybody has to learn it. It is an artificial state. We are not born knowing how to manage conscience, and to apply the rules of conscience to speech and conduct. It is an artificial result of training. *Bring up your child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Tell him how to be benevolent; how to be unselfish; how to be humane; how to be truthful. And let him practice these things. If you are teaching your child to take the steps in a dancing-room, you do not fly either into a passion or into a state of terror, because the first time he attempts to take the steps on the floor in the presence of his companions, he moves awkwardly. Children *learn* grace, though some with more aptitude than others. Every one learns where to put the feet; and at last it becomes a habit. He learns how to use the hands, which are the most cumbrous and useless things in the world, when first one is brought into company. He never knows where to put them. And the child has to learn this. It is a great thing to learn how to do nothing with your hands when there is nothing to be done. And men are patient in these matters. If it is leaping, if it is a saltatory education, men say, "Teach nature. Wait for the child. Give him a chance."

But the conscientious mother is overwhelmed with grief; and when the husband comes home, she says, "My dear, Charley has told a lie!" Yes, he has. Probably he has told a hundred; and he will tell a hundred more. For telling the truth is like archery: and no boy hits the mark the first time. He does not know how to aim. He has got to learn. And I will assure you it is a great education to learn how to tell the truth. There are a great many people who never learn it all their life long.

And the child is not to be either violently punished nor suspected, though he steal; though he rob; though he be caught in dirty and bestial tricks. Why, we were born of the dust, and the dirt sticks to us, in a large measure, a good ways up. And children beginning as they do, and where they do, it is not the less necessary that they should be drilled. It is all the more necessary. But it throws a light upon the task of the parents. You are not to think that you have another Nero in your cradle, you are not to think that you have another Cata-

line, because the lower animal nature of the child is most developed, and because evils are breaking out in him all the time. God says to you, "Bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and you must teach him and train him. Nurture, *nurture*, NURTURE him out of these animal tendencies, into manly tendencies. And if you bring faith and patience to the work, you will certainly have success.

These are the lessons to be learned; these are the life-problems; these are the qualities which may differ in each child; and they are to be *learned*—not inherited. I suppose that inheritance has a great deal to do with it; I suppose hereditary tendencies go on. It is the promise that to those who keep His commandments, God will be gracious to the third and fourth generations. This is the law of hereditary descent. If a man is educated, his child will take on education easier, because his father transmitted the tendency to him. And that tendency will go on increasing. If a man is conscientious, within certain bounds, his child will be more naturally conscientious than if there had not been this hereditary tendency. The father's nature is transmitted to the child. A tendency to goodness in the parent begets a tendency to goodness in the offspring.

Therefore, some children will be more tempted to passion than others. Every child receives something from his parents; so that some children require far less instruction than others. But all children, however constituted, require to be taught how to perform the commonest moral duty. You must not think that you are going to have saints born to you. You have nothing but the raw material. You must spin it, and weave it, and cut it out, and make it into the garment of the saints.

4. A child, in order to learn how to govern itself, must be indulged in self-government—a thing which hardly ever occurs to parents. We always drive a horse with bits in his mouth; and parents seem to think that that is the way to drive children—to always keep bits in their mouth. But a horse never learns much; though some steeds become intelligent enough to be driven without the bit. Yet how many parents set out to be so conscientious and so thorough in their moral government, that they drive their children to death; that their children come out from under their hands, spoiled!

"Well," a parent says, "one thing is certain: my child has turned out bad; but you cannot charge it to me. I rose early and sat up late; and if I did not govern that child, there never was a child governed in this world." Yes, that is the very mischief of it. You ruined the child by governing it so that it did not learn to govern itself. Your business is not to govern your children, but to teach them self-government. And just as soon as you can commute authority in your-

self into automatic or voluntary action in the child, just so soon government ceases, and the child is to be permitted to govern itself.

A man winds up a watch; holding it still; and the watch does not stir; and again he winds, and winds, and winds; and when he stops again it does not go; and he insists upon it that he will make that watch go; and he keeps on winding it; and he breaks it. But after you have wound a watch up a certain way, if you turn it a little, it goes itself after that, if it is good for anything. And a child must not be wound up too much. Not that all peremptory obedience is to be foregone; for in many things life and health require absolutism for a limited time. But all government, mild or strict, should be aiming all the time at the child's enfranchisement; at the child's self-government. That should be the genius of your government. It is better for your child to do things poorly, it is better for your child to do very imperfect things, if thereby he is learning, than that he should do things well, if he is only following a copy. Put the child upon his own judgment. Insist upon it that he shall select, that he shall choose, that he shall find out how to do, how to act, how to live. Leave him to act in many things for himself. He will not act as well, perhaps, as if you had told him what to do; but as a part of the process by which he is learning, he will be a great deal more advantaged by this than if you told him what to do. Children are frequently instructed too much. They are overtaught.

A mistake made in the way toward self-government is often more salutary than imitative correctness. Put a pencil in a child's hand, and put a rose before him, saying to him, "Copy that rose." He would take his compasses, and measure it; but say to him, "Copy the rose out of your own eye, and out of your own hand." And he takes a piece of paper and he draws the best that he can. Now, when you come to look at it, it is a very poor copy. Now take a *theorem*, as it is called—a rose that has been cut in outline, through a piece of paste-board, and tell the child to take some water-color, and "rub in" that rose—to paint it. He does paint it. And when it is finished it looks almost like the real rose. But which does a child the most good, making a rose by a theorem, or making it without any copy except the thing itself, where he is obliged to study the relation of petal to petal, and the relation of flower to stem, and the whole with reference to light and shadow? The latter, evidently. He will make poor work at first; but it will educate him. And as he tries, he will come a little nearer and a little nearer yet. And although he may not make the rose, the rose will make him—an artist.

And so it may be in household life, and so it often is in the incipient stages of business life, that the second best is better than the first

best. That is to say, a child that is learning to do a thing of his own judgment and free-will, is profitted ten, twenty, fifty per cent. more than if he were told how to do it. The great thing is to teach a child how to do what he does, relying upon himself.

Trust your children then, as soon as it is safe. Let them, as far as possible, do the things which seem to them best. Then, afterward, point out where they could have done better. Then let them try again untrammelled. And then come in again with kindly criticism. So little by little make them self-reliant, independent in judgment, competent to manage the affairs that are around them.

This course will not avoid all evil. Neither will any course. We all pass toward perfection through infinite mistakes; and our children will not be better than we were. No course will be in a hurry. None will be perfect. All are relative. And this state of things will be more likely to bring in the end a noble and a safe character than any other.

This must extend itself far beyond what Christian parents often think. It is far better that your children should be taught to select their own pleasures, and their own enterprises, than that they should be arbitrarily and absolutely limited by your better judgment.

Of course this has its limitations. It must not be carried too far. I should not choose to have a child of mine run into absolute vice, or into crime, in order that it might learn. Within due bounds and moderation, however, it is better that the child should be permitted to judge about social pleasures, and ten thousand attractive things in life that children must needs be trained toward. There must be a divided course. Though you put metes and bounds, and will not permit certain things; yet within those metes and bounds let them exercise their judgment, and let your children do some things that you would not prefer them to do, in order that they may have the education of selection. There are vigorous exercises, field sports, daring efforts and attempts, that boys wish to engage in; and it is better that they should be allowed to have their way even at the expense of a good tumble, than that they should always be told just what to do, just where to begin, and just where to stop. You tell your children too much.

So in regard to company, instruct the children. Rouse up in them principles of honor. To be parceling out this family, and saying, "You must not associate with those bad boys;" to be selecting that class and circle, and incessantly forbidding the children from going into them; to have your children swell with desire; to have your children at home bubbling as a boiling tea-kettle does, and whining as it does—that is not wholesome. Sometimes it may be the least of two

evils; but as a general thing it is far better that you should begin beforehand, and educate the child to some sense of taste, to some sense of propriety, to some sense of character; and then say to him, "My child, you are coming into such and such circumstances. I want you to exercise your judgment. I appeal to your conscience."

A gentleman in this city told me that his mother, after he had come to be ten years old, almost never forbade him anything; but that he almost never did anything without asking her; and that her reply to him almost invariably was, "My son, think about it; and if you can reconcile it to your own conscience and your honor, I shall not say a word. Do it if you think it is best." She abhorred tobacco; and he wanted to smoke, for that devil gets into boys, when they do not know whether they are boys or men, almost invariably. And he came to her on one occasion to ask her if she had any objection to his learning how to smoke. It was like gall to her; but she said to him, "My son, I shall not say anything about it. Go and think it over, and make up your mind. If you can reconcile it to your own moral sense, do it. You must act as you think best." It was better a thousand times than a No. You may say No, and it will soon lose its effect; but when a man says No, himself, it does some good. He wears it a good deal jauntier and easier under such circumstances than when his mother says No. And that which we want more than anything else, is to teach the child discrimination, moral selection, fortitude to deny what he wants to do. And we want to bring the child to that pass in which, when things glitter and are most tempting, he shall have something in him which says, "I will not." The boy or girl is very nearly brought up well, that can say that. But there are multitudes of children that are brought up, who cannot say it, and who, therefore, are not well brought up.

I would not advocate the pressing of this trust too far, or too indiscriminately. That is to say, children sometimes come into life that are feeble, and that must be carried as children all their days. Therefore, there are those who probably can be advanced but a little way in self-government; and we must not sacrifice them to a theory. Yet, the general principle is a correct one, with such limitations as a discreet observation will itself teach you.

The reason why so many children turn out well, who seem to have been neglected is now very plain; though people generally marvel how it is. Here is a neglected neighborhood, and most of the boys have turned out honest and industrious, and are making a good living; and here are people who have been brought up in meeting, and meeting, and meeting, with nothing but catechism, and catechism, and have had none but good books, and only good boys to go with; and see what

has become of them. "One man sent his boy to college, and he broke down a drunkard before he got through the freshman year. He attempted four or five times to reform, but failed; and now he is a vagabond, and has gone nobody knows where. And that is what is called bringing up children!" But stop, let us look at this case a little, and see what is in it. Take a boy. He may not have been sent to school, perhaps, but he may have had a sensible mother. And though he may not have had an eminent and talented father, yet, he may have had a father who, though poor and not educated, was honest and industrious. He may not have been perverted by his parents, in other words. But having had a reasonable endowment of health and mental organization, he was left to take care of himself, under circumstances that did not happen to overmatch his own prudence and his own fortitude. The child was not educated; but he was taught from the beginning of his life to govern himself. He learned, when he was a little boy, to think for himself, and say where he would go, and where he would not go. He did not become prematurely smart; but he was fortunate in his temperament and his associations; and when he had grown up into life he had learned one thing (and there is nothing more important to learn)—self-government. He had learned to take care of himself.

On the other hand, here is a mother who is most profoundly religious and conscientious. Why, she would die for her child, and die a hundred times; but she does not know that governing a child means to teach it to take care of itself, without anybody's looking after it. And so she looks after her child. When it goes to bed, she looks after it; and when it gets up she looks after it; and every step it takes during the day she looks after it. It is, "My dear, do not do this," and, "My dear, do not do that." The child can scarcely yawn without going to ask its mother's permission. It is followed and hedged in, and cuffed gently this way and that way. And after fifteen years have passed, the child is a baby yet, as far as competency of judgment is concerned. It has not learned how to take care of itself. And having a strong temperament, and being frequently restrained, it has not been taught to govern its feelings by an exercise of them. They are all dammed up; and they are without practice. If children are imaginative, and full of sensibility, the world to them is a great wonder-box. And when they come to be twenty-one years of age, they go out and say, "I have never seen anything; I never felt anything; I do not know anything; I have always been shut up at home; and now I am going to have my revenge. I will first find out a thing or two." They are like men who go down into the battle naked—neither with weapons of offense nor weapons of defense. And they are smitten through and destroyed. Then people say, "How astonishing that a child who has been so thor-

oughly brought up should perish so!" The very mischief is that he was destroyed in the family. The very thing that the father and mother were told to do, they did not do, namely, to teach the child how to take care of himself. They took care of him all the while.

The child must sin if he is going to learn not to sin. You must let him stumble in order that the next time he may know where to put his feet. The child learns by the things which he suffers, the parent standing by to say, "There is the cause and there is the effect. Now look, after this." This disciplines the child's conscience, and disciplines his power of selection.

If it is not safe to do this, the other thing is still less safe. That is what is meant by the phrase "governing too much." I say that it is not governing too much, it is governing *wrong*. It is not governing so as to produce a potency in the subject.

5.—There is an order in nature for the development of the child which we must observe and follow. First and earliest, is the animal life. And it is strongest as being the substratum, as it were; the soil out of which the others spring. Next is the line of affection and imagination. And the imagination is fertile and stronger far than reason. All the earlier instruction takes on the imaginative form, the pictorial form, the form of fable and parable. Later comes the intellectual and the abstract in the line of instruction. And last comes the moral sense.

Now the child does not carry up all these elements together. Everything does not go along at once. The child is literal and animal at first, and so it is for a year; but little by little it opens up out of the animal state. That which comes next is always the affectional and the imaginative. Still later—and frequently quite late; for these things come at different times with different children—come the reason and the moral sense. When the reason begins to dawn, first is the perceptive reason, as that which concerns itself with external objects. Next is the reflective. That comes later than the perceptive.

The parent then, ought to know the order by which the child develops itself, in order to know how to properly train and discipline that child while he is yet a little animal. It is all in vain to attempt to make him a little saint. You cannot anticipate nature. Nature furnishes rules in respect to culture. We must give nature time, therefore. Our children will be animals, but they will leave their animal nature behind them little by little, as they are going on and going up. Do not be afraid because your child is not perfect at first. We must have faith to believe that each successive development of the child will correct the preceding.

Does your child exhibit animal instincts when he is five years old? Be of good courage. Correct it. Check it. And the lower down the

child is, the more is the rod beneficial. Physical force for physical conditions. As you go away from physical conditions, affectional influences come in. And as you go still higher, the intellectual and moral influences come in.

There is, as I have said, an order of nature; and when the child lives in the physical life, physical pain is better than argument which it does not understand and does not feel. But it belongs to the lowest form; and it should be always with this aim. The tendency should be to disuse it as soon as possible by carrying the child up to the next stage.

Now, when the child comes to the affectional state, it rids itself of a great many faults that you could not correct without the aid of nature. A child will outgrow most of his faults by the time he is five or six or seven years of age.

"My first child," says the parent, "was such a good child! But God took it away early. I was not good enough for it. But this next child—it does seem to me that the old Nick is in it, it is such an awful child. It lies, and steals, and it is full of all manners of nasty habits. I do not know what I shall do with this child. I have prayed over it, and prayed over it, and prayed over it."

My dear friends, far be it from me to ridicule prayer; but then do you suppose that if your stove was broken, the way to mend it would be to pray? If your watch was broken you would send it to the watchmaker. And do you suppose that if you should go in April and stand under an apple-tree and pray for the apples to get ripe, and for the pippins to drop down into your cap, that they would? You must wait all summer for them to ripen.

I believe in praying for children and laying up prayer for them; but I do not believe in praying for a child, expecting that the prayers are going to be answered in that child by a course which reverses the order of nature and works a miracle in it. A child that is only five or six or seven years of age, is living in but one portion of himself, and almost wholly in his animal conditions. Pray that you may be patient; pray that you may have grace until he comes up one stage higher; and by and by you begin to draw out the child's affection, and to connect him with processes or a system of self-control. And as the family gets larger, family government always gets larger, because one child helps to govern another. The first child comes into the second stage, and you will find that many of his faults disappear; so you will say to yourself, "Well, the child is really getting better." That is to say, the child has two sets of faculties; and the higher ones are beginning to govern the lower ones; the affection is beginning to have ascendancy over the animal nature. But in the management of the affec-

tion, which is full of selfishness, full of envies and jealousies, full of competitions, full of all manner of irregularities; your educated moral sense is offended, and you are in tribulation again about your child. You pray to God to sanctify the child early, and watch for the answer of your prayer, and are disappointed that it does not come. But wait. When the child is fifteen or sixteen years of age it undergoes a physical change, not only, but with that change there comes in also a moral change. Deeper moral impulses and wider inspirations and aspirations now manifest themselves. And you will find, if the child has been carefully governed and guided, that those faults which belong to the second stage, disappear of themselves. The third range of motives then come in and they correct the faults of the second, as the second came in to correct those of the first.

Now this order of nature must be observed, not simply for the wiser bringing up of the child, but also for the removing of care, the burden of anxiety, and sense of awful responsibility to which many parents are in bondage.

Let me say, here, that I would not have these remarks construed into a disbelief that children may grow up Christians from the cradle. I believe they may. But you are not to look for a Christian man in a child's skin. There will be just so much as there is of the child, with all its faults and irregularities. The evidences that a child is Christ's are not the same evidences which a full-grown man exhibits who is a Christian. I believe that children may be converted and consecrated to God from the cradle—from the moment that they begin to experience symptoms of the heart; but then they will not be Christians of the same pattern, or magnitude, or sympathy, or balance that we see among adults. They will require other treatment, and more treatment of certain sorts, than those who have come into mature life.

But while I believe in early conversions, I do not believe in early saintship. I think there is nothing more monstrous than a little five-year-old Puritan. Where there are these prodigies of piety, one of two things is usually true. The whole life of the child is premature, and he is marked for early death, and everything rushes to momentary ripeness, and he withers and dies; or he is over-cerebrated; he has not the muscle and bone and strength to resist the enormous reaction. High mental endowment may have a premature genius for goodness. And it is beautiful. But it is unnatural, and is not to be coveted—and all the more because these children break the hearts of parents when they die and go.

But those that live and grow up—the Lord save me from them. Deliver me from premature saintship. I cannot endure to see a girl forty years old before she is five. I cannot endure to see a boy imi-

tating Isaiah or Dante when he is not yet out of his pantalettes. Childhood is the best thing for childhood, youth is the best thing for youth, middle life is the best thing for middle life, and old age is the best thing for old age. But old age grafted on to a young stalk is a very poor graft.

The attempt, therefore, to stuff our children with religious experiences; the attempt to make our children talk and pray and work, like grown folks, is most disagreeable, as well as most unnatural. I think there is great injury in any such precipitate and premature development of a child. Let the child be an animal until it has outgrown animalism. Let it be social until it begins to be developed into the moral. Let the moral element come into the ascendancy and permanency when it comes by nature to be the strongest part. Till that time you must be to the child conscience and sensibility and taste. You must minister to the child by love from without, until he has by the natural evolution of nature come to a point where he can develop his own conscience, and reason, and higher faculties.

As there is many and many a child that is ripe early, and breaks down in later life, so there is many and many a child that bids fair for the halter until he is after fifteen, and becomes noble and self-commanding in life as he grows older.

Ethical duties, then, should be learned from the beginning; but high religious experiences ought not to be urged upon any child. If religion is brought to them in any exciting form at all, it should be brought to them in its sweetest and most pleasurable forms.

6. If the child is a scholar, then the parent is a teacher; and the parent should know his tastes, and the tools with which he is to work.

First, governing mind is based on one simple fact, namely, that in the philosophy of the human mind one faculty is to be governed or changed in its action by the excitation of another and opposite faculty. We undertake to put down a feeling both in ourselves and in our pupils. But the art of putting down a feeling consists in the art of raising up another one which will put it down. If the child is peevish, there is no use scolding the child for peevishness. Let the peevishness alone, and awaken kind and benevolent feelings. Benevolence will take care of peevishness, and you will be saved the trouble.

Is the child full of audacity? Touch the feeling of fear in the child by an appropriate representation. You do not need to restrain the audacity directly. Correct audacity by fear. Fear will take care of it. Or, *vice versa*, courage, being raised in the child by praise, overcomes fear. There is a great deal of power in sympathetically lending courage to a child. If children are imaginative, and full of sensibility and acute temperament, they may often suffer immensely from

fear. I am not much of a coward, as I am accustomed to think of myself; but I went through a great deal of suffering of fear in my childhood, when it was not needful. For, under some persons' care, I was taught to be very courageous; and then I was able to face things which at other times I slunk down from with the utmost trepidation. A mother can breathe her large courage into a child, either morally or physically.

The art of governing a child's mind, then, is to know what part of it to touch, in order to countervail some other part. It is on this theory that all our faculties are in mates, or, as it were, in counterparts. Over against every single one of the faculties of the human mind there is a corresponding or opposite faculty. And so government comes. The excitation of one faculty is the restraint of another.

If, therefore, fear goes down, it is because courage is going up. Or if courage is running too high, lift up fear, and then courage will go down. If the child is full of grief, mirth will oftentimes cure it. And if mirth is carried too high, and the child is unduly gay and frivolous, then conscience being touched, will frequently control and restrain it. And so a world of advice, a world of educating, a world of pointing out this and that, may be saved. You can psychologically teach the human mind sooner, you can more speedily bring the child to make use of his mind, than you can teach him to do it by philosophizings and explanations, half of which he does not understand.

There is also to be remembered this general rule: that the feeling which you bring to your child is probably the feeling which will exist in him. If you are courageous, your child will naturally feel the inspiration of courage. There will be a contagion. I believe that there is a mesmeric influence, a magnetic power, an aura, or whatever you please to call it, that goes out of one feeling in a man, and touches the corresponding feeling in another man. If you go to your child full of mirth, the child will laugh before you get near it. If you go to the child with great benevolence and kindness, the child runs into the same state of feeling. If your child is irritated, and that irritates you, and you go to the child to compel him, the result is that he gets madder and madder. He may not dare to show it; he may be restrained from exhibiting his anger by the motive of fear; but it is there. If the child is excited, you must be calm. If the child is revengeful, you must be most lenient, most forgiving. If the child is in any mood that you abhor, it is not for you to show your abhorrence of it. Every parent must be a pupil first, and then be a teacher. What you want your child to be, you must learn to carry to him.

Lastly, the supreme influence of moral government in the family, the state, and in God's universe, I believe to be the light of kind-

ness. Whatever may be the thing that you undertake, the law of kindness in the eye and on the lip and in the hand—in things negative and in things positive and affirmative—the law of the household, the law of association must be kindness. That is the summer in which all the evil that is in children will naturally tend to wither early, and all the good that is in them will go forward with root and with stem, bearing abundant fruit. If you would govern your children well day by day, remember God is *love*. God *condemned the world for sin*, never converted a soul. God *so loved the world that He gave His Son for it*, has converted multitudes. It is love that is the Magister; it is love that is the Emperor; it is love that is the God.

Now, in closing, let me say to the young that are moving forward along the appointed paths of life, that gaiety and joyfulness, and entering into the marriage relation, and sending forth the joyful outcry, "Behold a man-child is born into the world," is all well. Do not think that I am out of sympathy with you in this. I will rejoice with your joy. But still there is not any thing so serious in life; there is no step that is so full of weighty responsibility as accepting from the hand of God one of his little ones, which you are to train. For the light and glory of having children in the family is not a mere matter of pride and social pleasure. It is a matter of the greatest moment. And while I would not take away from your joy, I would temper it with a deeper insight. I would give you a sense of what the meaning of this opening into life is, that you may bring to it all your heart, and all your soul, and cry unto God for help in this great work of your life. And let me say still further, that I count the rearing of children in the household to be one of God's opportunities, than which there scarcely can be any other greater. I do not undervalue other relations in life. To be a magistrate, to be a noble, to be a king, where these things are esteemed; to be a genius and an instructor in the community at large—this certainly has its dignity and its nobility. But, after, all, there is no place, it seems to me, that realizes so much of the virtue of Christ's heart, and there is no place that is so much like heaven, and there is no place that will be so crowned with honors, as that family in which the father and mother are striving to rear their children for usefulness in this life, and for immortality in the life which is to come.

You know very well that I do not believe there ought to be any prejudice, nor public sentiment, nor custom, nor law, to prevent a woman speaking in public, if she has a desire to speak, or singing in public if she has a genius for song. I believe that a woman may do anything which she feels called to do, and can do well. But while I honor these things, and stand for the liberty of woman in regard to them, it must not be thought that I consider a woman who

is so clothed with genius more noble on that account. I hold that the woman who sings hymns over the cradle that her child may learn the eternal songs of heaven, is doing a higher work than if she were like Jenny Lind, and sang on the concert stage. I hold that no orator, and no singer, and no artist-worker, is to be compared with the mother who is carving the image of God in the soul of her little child. And no mother need fear that she is obscure; no mother need long to go out of the household, as if it were an obscure place. *The Gate of Heaven* is inscribed over every humble family; and no Christian mother who is teaching her children in the school-house of her own heart, need crave any higher walk than that. Be content; thank God for the privilege; be faithful to your charge; and you, winged as the angels are, shall lead your young immortal one day higher and higher into the heavenly land, until you pause at the feet of Jesus.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

O Lord our God! wilt thou open thine arms and take thy children into the bosom of thy love. As thou hast committed them to the love of their parents, so take both parents and children unto thyself. And teach these parents how to teach their offspring, so that both may find their way, through faith and patience, to the heavenly land. Give them great joy of their children. May they be more precious to them than all other things on earth. May they be willing to spend and to be spent for them. May they not ask that they shall have their reward in this life (yet grant them somewhat of it); but may they look forward and believe in that life which is to come, when they shall be gathered, and all their children with them, group on group, none left behind, none lost, all saved, through the unspeakable mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that parents who are rejoicing in their children may know how to rejoice in the Lord. Grant that those who are heavy-hearted over their children may be lightened of their care and of their burden, and so guided of thee that they shall not fail to bring their children with them when they appear in Zion and before God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt look upon those who have consecrated their children, whether in the public assembly or privately in their own closets. Accept that dedication which they have made of their children; and in so far as it lies in them, may they be able to bring up their children so that they shall be honorable and prosperous in this life, and also enter the life that is to come.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may be more and more rebuked at our want of faith, and our want of fidelity, and our want of earnestness in rearing our children for God. Teach us how to use the world in their behalf without abusing it. Teach us how so to set an example before them that we may be a living Gospel to them.

Bless mothers, through whose sufferings we came into this world, and whose life was given for our life. And bless, we beseech of thee, their soli-

*Immediately following the baptism of children.

tude, and all the thoughts which they pondered deeply. Bless mothers as they set their children apart in the sanctuary at home, and pray over them and instruct them in the way of the Lord. And grant that they may take comfort by the way, and rejoice in the tasks and the duties which thou hast made incumbent upon them.

And have compassion upon any who are not able to teach their children of Christ; who know thee not themselves; who cannot teach their little ones the way of life because they have not found it for their own feet. Lord Jesus, in the greatness of their care for their children, disclose thyself unto them; and may every parent that is training children for immortality, make sure of the help of God. And may thy love illumine their darkness, and fill them with hope and with courage, and with true wisdom. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us how to refine our life for our children more and more. Make our homes more and more full of the heavenly Spirit. Cast out all infirmity, and all rudeness, and all sin, and all clamor, and all things that offend the purity of thine eye, and the sweetness of thine heart. And we pray that Christian households may more and more be those lights that shall guide men from vice to virtue, and from the ways of this world and its wickedness to the ways of Jesus Christ and his virtue and joy.

Grant thy blessing to rest, we pray thee, upon those who are teaching. May those to whom thou hast committed the care of young souls waiting for the seal, not be overburdened with fear and anxiety. May they know how to cast their care upon the Lord, and have such a holy confidence and such a blessed courage, that their children shall catch the inspiration, and overcome their easily besetting sins.

And we pray that thou wilt bless all schools for instruction, both in secular knowledge and in things divine. Bless our Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes, and all Mission-schools, and all those that, to-day, everywhere attempt to press knowledge upon the susceptible mind. Wilt the Lord guide them and bless them abundantly.

We pray for our whole land. We pray for knowledge, that it may spread, and that virtue may come with it. May temperance and self-denial and all true Christian charity prevail throughout this whole land.

Hasten the time when all nations shall know thee; when all shall be instructed and competent to instruct their offspring. And let the glory of the Lord, so long delayed, at last break forth as the morning, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the word of instruction which we have endeavored to give. May it do good. May it incite more thought, more prayer, more searching to see if it be in accordance with thy mind and will. Bless parents, and teach them how to be better parents. Bless their children; and in spite of the mistakes which they make, may thy grace triumph over their imperfect teaching. And may our children grow up to adorn life. And may they by faith take hold of the promises of the heavenly land. Bless us when we sing once more; and go with us to our homes; and finally, bring us to our homes above.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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
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